**2019 VISCUS UMPIRING REPORT**

There were 68 VDCA league and playoff games scheduled in 2019. Of these, one was cancelled due to bad weather and two more were rained out – umpires’ decisions.

Of the 65 games that were played, two sets of umpires submitted no match reports and one believed he had sent it in but no-one (including him) could trace it, one match was self umpired when the umpires failed to turn up, and three matches had only one umpire. 59 matches (including the one with a report which went missing) had two assigned umpires. Not perfect yet, but getting there.

One issue that went on longer than any other season I can remember was umpires officiating games without having registered beforehand. Darren would deduct the registration fee from the umpires’ expenses but getting the form filled in remained a problem. 64 different umpires officiated games and going into the closing stages of the season as many as 25 did not appear to have registered. I have no information as to how many of these finally registered. But clearly from the point of view of knowing whether we have qualified umpires, and with regard to insurance, this is not a satisfactory situation.

The commentary by captains on umpires was generally very positive. 62% of the reports were positive to very positive, 10% contained critical commentary but mostly on specific issues, described below. Umpires got an unfavourable comment on their overall performance on just two occasions. Only 28% of the reports contained no comment from either captain, which is an improvement (i.e. more captains are commenting.). It is helpful if captains continue this trend, even if the comment is just one word.

The issues raised by captains were diverse with no one issue being of repeated concern, with the possible exception of umpiring decisions related to stopping matches for bad weather. There was a focus on this question when there was a particularly rainy weekend and different umpires made different decisions in different matches. This is an item to be discussed at the VISCUS AGM.

Other issues raised, almost always in just one set of match reports were: stumping, run outs, lbw, bouncer rule, front foot no-ball, leg side wides, chucking, overs not being deducted when a team turned up late, and umpires changing ends. In most cases these may have been matters of lost concentration by umpires rather than conscious rule interpretation; but it will always be useful to have a ‘refresher’ on these, perhaps at the season pre-meeting and/or in Gopal Gowda’s ‘cheat sheet’ reissued each year.

Umpire commentary on the conduct of games was likewise generally positive. The discussion on weather may have been the only time things got a little heated. Punctuality (by both players and umpires) and slow over rates were the subjects of two isolated comments.

Overall the season seems to have been a further improvement in the overall conduct of cricket and umpiring in the VDCA.

Recommendations:

Captains be strongly reminded of the need for all their team umpires to register before the season starts. If this does not bring about the desired effect, then consideration be given before the 2021 season as to whether failure to register before umpiring should incur sanctions.

The names of the officiating umpires be included in the game reports published on the website to facilitate the ‘chase’ process when match reports are not forwarded to VISCUS.